

## ***QUIZ: Signs of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in Older People***

The signs of alcoholism and drug addiction can be different in adults fifty-five years old and over than in younger people. They often drink alone at home so no one notices the severity of the problem. Many older adults are retired, so they don't have work-related problems due to their chemical dependency. They drive less, so there's less opportunity for them to get arrested for driving under the influence.

The following signs of an alcohol or other drug problem are typical in the older adult

- ☐ Prefers attending a lot of events where drinking is accepted, such as luncheons, "happy hours," and parties
- ☐ Drinks in solitary, hidden way
- ☐ Makes a ritual of having drinks before, with, or after dinner, and becomes annoyed when this ritual is disturbed
- ☐ Loses interest in activities and hobbies that used to bring pleasure
- ☐ Drinks in spite of warning labels on prescription drugs
- ☐ Always has bottles of tranquilizers on hand and takes them at the slightest sign of disturbance
- ☐ Is often intoxicated or slightly tipsy, and sometimes has slurred speech
- ☐ Disposes of large volumes of empty beer and liquor bottles and seems secretive about it
- ☐ Often has the smell of liquor on his or her breath or mouthwash to disguise it
- ☐ Is neglecting personal appearance and gaining or losing weight
- ☐ Complains of constant sleeplessness, loss of appetite, or chronic health complaints that seem to have no physical cause
- ☐ Has unexplained burns or bruises and tries to hide them
- ☐ Seems more depressed or hostile than usual
- ☐ Can't handle routine chores and paperwork without making mistakes
- ☐ Has irrational or undefined fears or delusions, or seems under unusual stress
- ☐ Seems to be losing his or her memory

Many of the symptoms listed above are attributed to other diseases or are considered part of the aging process. However, many older people find that once they achieve sobriety, these symptoms disappear.